



Director of  
Central  
Intelligence

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# Iraq: Saddam Husayn's Prospects for Survival Over the Next Year

Special National Intelligence Estimate

*This Special National Intelligence Estimate  
represents the views of the Director of  
Central Intelligence with the advice and  
assistance of the US Intelligence Community.*

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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D. C. 20505

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: SNIE 36.2-91: Iraq: Saddam Husayn's Prospects For Survival Over The Next Year

I would like to call readers' attention to the Estimate's discussion of Saddam's vulnerabilities. In my view, the key value of this paper is its appraisal of the intense internal and external pressures on the regime in Iraq. Many in the Intelligence Community felt strongly about making a judgment on Saddam's survivability, and such views are presented in the Key Judgments. This, along with the brevity of the Key Judgments, may obscure for the reader the paper's contribution to our understanding of his considerable vulnerabilities, which is found in the main text and which I commend to your attention.

  
Richard V. Kerr  
Acting

  
~~SECRET~~



SNIE 36.2-91

# Iraq: Saddam Husayn's Prospects for Survival Over the Next Year

*Information available as of 30 August 1991 was used  
in the preparation of this Special National Intelligence Estimate.*

*The following intelligence organizations participated  
in the preparation of this Estimate:*

The Central Intelligence Agency  
The Defense Intelligence Agency  
The National Security Agency  
The Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research,  
Department of State  
The Office of Intelligence Support,  
Department of the Treasury  
The Director for Intelligence,  
Department of Energy  
The Intelligence Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation

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The Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence,  
Department of the Army  
The Director of Naval Intelligence,  
Department of the Navy  
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The Director of Intelligence,  
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*This Estimate was approved for publication by the  
National Foreign Intelligence Board.*

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## **Iraq: Saddam Husayn's Prospects for Survival Over the Next Year**

- **Saddam Husayn has been weakened by Desert Storm, the Shia and Kurdish rebellions, and economic and social damage, but his key support groups still have a stake in the system or are cowed by his skill at intimidation and reward. Unless their support erodes significantly, we conclude that the odds favor that Saddam will still be ruling Iraq one year from now.<sup>1</sup>**
- **Senior military officers have ample reasons to be disenchanted with Saddam, but his pervasive security networks, the threat of purges and retribution, and his role as a symbol of national unity are likely to serve as restraints on military opposition.**
- **Saddam will try to maintain the relatively privileged living standards of his key supporters and appease the rest of the population with promises of a better future, but continued economic sanctions will deepen the fissures in Iraqi society. Lifting of sanctions, on the other hand, would provide significant relief to the regime and would strengthen Saddam's prospects for survival.**
- **Iraq will have only limited capabilities to endanger US interests during the next year. Nonetheless, the United States will be challenged to monitor and, if necessary, contain the actions of Saddam's regime, particularly with respect to weapons of mass destruction and treatment of opponents at home and abroad. We consider it unlikely that he will authorize terrorist acts against US targets in the coming year, although he probably will take such measures against dissidents and defectors and could also try to undermine regional coalition partners.**

<sup>1</sup> State/INR and Treasury believe that, while Saddam may be able to weather the many challenges facing him, there is also a significant possibility that his hold on power could crumble rapidly and with little notice. State/INR and Treasury do not believe there is sufficient information on the institutions/individuals Saddam relies on for maintaining power to support a firm judgment on his survival.

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*Figure 1. Saddam in the mobile command post during the Gulf crisis. (U)*

# Key Judgments

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## Saddam's Survivability

Saddam Husayn's once absolute power over Iraq has eroded. Desert Storm, Shia and Kurdish rebellions, associated economic and social damage, and the continuing effects of international inspections and sanctions have weakened him. We believe that he, like most of his predecessors, will eventually be ousted from power in an extraconstitutional and violent change of regime. Nonetheless, his key support groups—security services, Republican Guard, and extended family—still have a stake in the system or may be influenced by his skill at intimidation and reward. We conclude that the odds are that Saddam will still be ruling Iraq one year from now.<sup>2</sup> Only significant erosion of support from key groups would alter this judgment.

## After Saddam?

Any successor to Saddam will most likely share his perspectives on the threats to Iraqi interests and will come from the same political culture. But a successor, at least initially, would enjoy some international support and recognition, and would need to build a broader base of domestic support than Saddam. Thus, although faced with many of the same problems as Saddam, we think a successor would pursue different, and probably less brutal, solutions to Iraq's challenges.<sup>3</sup>

## The Military's Position

Senior military officers have many reasons to be disenchanted with Saddam, including his August 1990 rapprochement with Iran, his loss of Soviet backing during the Kuwait crisis, and his current inability to rebuild the military and restore complete sovereignty. But Saddam retains a number of levers to keep military opposition in check. Many military leaders continue to see him as a symbol of national unity; this perception,

<sup>2</sup> State/INR and Treasury believe that, while Saddam may be able to weather the many challenges facing him, there is also a significant possibility that his hold on power could crumble rapidly and with little notice. State/INR and Treasury do not believe there is sufficient information on the institutions/individuals Saddam relies on for maintaining power to support a firm judgment on his survival.

<sup>3</sup> The Deputy Director for Intelligence, CIA, the Military Intelligence Board (MIB) (composed of DIA and the military services' intelligence chiefs) and Director, NSA, believe this sentence overstates the likelihood of significant policy changes on the part of a successor to Saddam. CIA, the MIB, and NSA further believe that any likely successor would share Saddam's regional ambitions and would pursue similar methods at home to suppress Shia and Kurdish ambitions.

combined with his pervasive security networks and the fear of purges and retribution, serve as restraints. Military support for Saddam could erode if senior officers perceived their—and Iraq's—long-term interests were being threatened by Saddam's inability to get sanctions removed, end intrusive inspections, or by involvement in police actions against their own people. A successful move against Saddam would emerge from carefully guarded planning, minimizing the chance that we would detect it in advance.

#### **Economic Vulnerability**

The economy remains a key vulnerability. We cannot isolate the impact of sanctions as a single determinant of developments in Iraq, but we see the cost of sanctions as deepening fissures in Iraqi society.<sup>4</sup> Saddam will try to maintain the relatively privileged living standards of his key supporters and appease the rest of the population with promises of a better future, but he will find it impossible to insulate most of the population from economic deprivation. Elite groups are also feeling the pinch of sanctions, as demonstrated by the exodus of tens of thousands of skilled middle-class Iraqis, and the regime's inability to resupply and rebuild the military establishment. Significant lifting of sanctions, on the other hand, would provide relief to the regime and would strengthen Saddam's prospects for survival.

#### **Cracks in Saddam's Hold on the Sunni Heartland?**

Some fissures have appeared in what had been a strictly regimented society. Evidence exists of increased lawlessness—including crime, bribery, begging, kidnapping for ransom, and prostitution, open criticism of Saddam, and flight of Iraqis (including Sunni Arab middle-class professionals) from the country. Together, these developments could undermine Saddam's reputation as the only leader capable of preserving Iraq.

#### **Saddam's Short-Term Goals**

Saddam will concentrate on giving Iraq the appearance of political stability while he tries to rebuild the country's civilian economy and military capabilities:

- He will try to reassert control over all of Iraq but will probably calibrate his actions against Kurds and Shia to forestall an international reaction, unless he fears civil war or loss of key cities—in which case he would not hesitate to launch large-scale counterinsurgency campaigns.

<sup>4</sup> The CIA's Deputy Director for Intelligence; the members of the Military Intelligence Board; and the Director, National Security Agency, believe that economic sanctions, even combined with political isolation and other pressures, will not be sufficient to cause a change of regime in Baghdad over the next 12 months.

- He will concentrate on getting sanctions eased or removed and oil sales approved. He will give top priority to rebuilding the military to ensure its loyalty and to protect its capabilities, regardless of the status of sanctions.
  - He will try to normalize diplomatic and trade ties and woo foreign governments and companies back to Baghdad by offering reconstruction contracts and preferential treatment in oil sales and debt repayment.
- 

**Saddam's Continuing Challenge to US Interests**

If Saddam remains in power, the United States will face challenges to:

- Monitor, and, if necessary, contain the actions of a defiant Saddam Husayn, especially with respect to UN resolutions on weapons of mass destruction and to treatment of the regime's opponents at home and abroad.
- Support Saddam's neighbors who participated in Desert Storm who may be targets of Iraqi subversion and harassment; at the same time, manage what are likely to be divergent policies as some regional states fear chronic turmoil in Iraq and may take measures to resume contact with Iraq.
- Maintain guard against potential Iraqi terrorism; we judge the most likely targets to be Iraqi dissidents and defectors, as well as regional neighbors who were part of the coalition. We think that Iraqi terrorism against US targets is not likely over the coming year.

# Scope Note

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This Special National Intelligence Estimate is based on two key assumptions: Saddam will not fully comply with UN resolutions, and most sanctions will remain in effect, although increasing amounts of food and humanitarian assistance may be provided. We also considered significant changes in Western or coalition policies toward Iraq, including the resumption of military hostilities, as beyond the scope of the Estimate.

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# Discussion

## Saddam's Prospects: Can He Survive?

Saddam Husayn's once absolute power over Iraq has eroded: he no longer enjoys authority over all the country, has fewer resources to keep his followers satisfied, and has to be more wary than ever of the loyalty of his security forces and inner circle. But Saddam is skilled in using instruments of intimidation and reward, and we see his many detractors as lacking access, power, or motivation to bring the system down. We conclude that the odds are that Saddam will still be ruling Iraq one year from now.<sup>5</sup> Only a significant erosion of support from key groups would alter this judgment. [ ]

Long years of reward and repression have shaped a generation of Iraqis who only know Saddam's rule and fear his power. They appear to have little confidence in their ability to remove Saddam. He has projected himself as the unifying symbol of Iraq whose elimination would mean instability, decentralization, and eventually partition. Dissidents are probably incapable of cooperating or building and sustaining the kind of coherent, coordinated effort needed to overthrow Saddam within one year. [ ]

The brutal and preemptive political style that created "the republic of fear" will continue to define and shield Saddam. He will continue to rely on a few cohorts to advise and protect him. Members of his extended family, the Cabinet, the government, and the Ba'th Party may dislike his policies and threats and may believe he should be removed, but they are all unlikely to risk taking the first step against him. They will be constrained principally by fear but also by the belief that only a strong leader—perhaps only

<sup>5</sup> State/INR and Treasury believe that, while Saddam may be able to weather the many challenges facing him, there is also a significant possibility that his hold on power could crumble rapidly and with little notice. State/INR and Treasury do not believe there is sufficient information on the institutions/individuals Saddam relies on for maintaining power to support a firm judgment on his survival. [ ]

### Plus Ça Change . . .

*The Iraqi regime has proven more durable than predicted, but its position still depends more on the ineffectiveness and mutual antagonism of its opponents than on its own strength. Although we cannot identify any individuals or groups likely to bring off a successful coup, plotting is endemic in military circles, and assassination is an ever-present possibility. The present state of affairs could drift on awaiting a development that would focus the present generalized discontent.* [ ]

*We believe the Iraqi economy will continue in its present state for the next year or so. Loss of oil revenues . . . will cause economic difficulties, stimulate discontent, and increase the chances of a move against the regime.* [ ]

— From a 1962 National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq. [ ]

Saddam himself—can wield the kind of authority that will keep Iraq whole and protect their self-interest. [ ]

We see some fissures in what had been a strict law-and-order regime. These developments may not mean a complete breakdown of civil authority, but reflect the desperate economic situation and may indicate an intentional relaxation of some internal controls. Recent visitors to Baghdad describe an increase in public lawlessness—including crime, bribery, begging, kidnapping for ransom, and prostitution, all uncharacteristic in Saddam Husayn's prewar Iraq. Perhaps more telling signs of social stress are reports of increasing numbers of Iraqis—many of them professionally skilled Sunni Arabs—leaving the country, some seeking

to emigrate. Iraq's continued international isolation has also become an increasing frustration for the Iraqi people. [ ]

The majority of Sunni Arabs rallied around Saddam during March and April out of fear of the Shia and Kurdish uprisings, but some are now vocalizing their discontent. Though mindful of the repercussions of criticizing Saddam and of the regime's continuing capacity for repression, many Iraqis are also frightened of Saddam's apparent willingness to bring further destruction upon them. Among the causes of their concerns are rumors that Saddam has hidden nuclear materials in residential areas. Saddam should be able to contain the hatred and fear being more openly expressed by civilians, but his ability to cope with these problems will be further complicated if sanctions remain in place. Ultimately these stresses could undermine Saddam's reputation as the only leader capable of maintaining a safe and secure Iraq. [ ]

Saddam will probably be able to manage threats from the military over the next year. Most senior military leaders, especially Republican Guard commanders, will remain loyal because of their similar background and outlook, the perquisites they enjoy, and their perception of the internal and external threats to Saddam and Iraq.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, by directly involving them in the bloody suppression of the rebellions, Saddam has linked their fate to his. They will also fear the extensive networks of spies within their ranks and the punishments meted out to suspected traitors and their families. [ ]

To contain the ambitions of his generals and ensure their loyalty and his security, Saddam will continue to do what he has always done:

- Concentrate on the Republican Guard, trying to ensure it is the best equipped and supplied arm of Iraq's military, even if this requires stripping Regular Army units of armor, artillery, other equipment, or personnel.

<sup>6</sup> State/INR believes Saddam's ability to manage threats from the military remains in question. While we can presume that Saddam has chosen military commanders he believes to be loyal, we currently lack information on the identities of many Republican Guard commanders, thus making it impossible to assess their loyalty. [ ]

- Reshuffle commanders and reassign loyal Republican Guard officers to command positions at all levels of the Army.
- Try to protect special weapons programs, reinvest in indigenous conventional arms programs, and encourage foreign arms suppliers to evade sanctions.
- Keep the military's sense of mission high by emphasizing Iranian meddling and Israeli or US threats. [ ]

But even Saddam's best efforts to keep up his military's morale may not suffice. The military has been involved in virtually every government change since 1932, and it seems that Saddam too will eventually share the violent fate of his predecessors. Some officers might move against Saddam if they believed his reckless and clumsy efforts to avoid compliance with UN resolutions invited military retaliation. They might also move if his actions appeared likely to lead to the disintegration of the country or prevent its recovery indefinitely. A successful move against Saddam would emerge from carefully guarded planning that minimizes the chance that we would detect it in advance. If Iraqi history serves as a guide, a change in regime may not be precipitated directly by social and economic discontent or ethnic unrest, which have never been far from the surface in Iraq. [ ]

Other circumstances, especially in combination, might undermine military support for Saddam:

- If the military perceived that sanctions were seriously degrading Iraq's defensive capability and Saddam was the obstacle to getting them removed.
- If they believed Saddam's weakness—his inability to remove foreign forces from, in, or near Iraq or to end intrusive inspections—invited attack or encouraged new rebellion from the Shias and the Kurds.
- If the military—especially the Republican Guard—were involved in sustained police action to maintain order in Sunni areas, including Baghdad.

### ***Saddam's Ideological Tools***

*In his long years in power, Saddam has developed several ideological tools in addition to military force and repression to demonstrate his hold on the country and create a new national identity out of a heterogeneous assortment of ethnic and religious groups. His actions and statements since the war and the rebellions suggest he will continue to use these tools to define his regime and himself:*

- Arab nationalism. *Saddam's political and ideological roots are in the Ba'th Party and its philosophy of an Arab renaissance based on unity, nationalism, and socialism. The party also gave Saddam a base for action and a means for seizing power. Ba'thism did not appeal to most Kurdish and Shia Iraqis, who saw it as a vehicle for Pan-Arabism and the Sunni Arab minority. Many were also unswayed by its political and economic messages. Saddam is not an ideologue, and he is willing to amend party thinking, if not its machinery, to attract broader national support. He will not, however, abandon it.*
- The cult of personality. *Saddam uses the propaganda organs of the state to cultivate an elaborate doctrine of "Saddam is Iraq and Iraq is Saddam." The message was effective in rallying*

*Arab Sunni support during the rebellions, and tributes to him are beginning to dominate Iraqi airwaves once again.*

- The Mesopotamian mystique. *Before the war, Saddam was reviving a consciousness of Iraq's ancient history, when, as Mesopotamia, it ruled from Persia to the Mediterranean Sea. Saddam's image was superimposed on posters and stamps over those of Hammurabi, Nebuchadnezzar, the ancient Akkadian Emperor Sargon, and Caliph Harun al-Rashid—whose rule of a Greater Iraq coincided with a golden age.*
- When all else fails, seek Islam. *Ba'thism is a strongly secular system of belief, but Saddam before the war made extensive efforts to woo Iraq's majority Shia population, including rebuilding religious shrines and concocting a bogus family tree that shows him as a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, according to [redacted] press accounts. In highly publicized meetings with Shia tribal and religious leaders since the end of the rebellions, he has offered to refurbish the shrines that had been severely damaged during the rebellion. Visitors to the mosque in Karbala after the rebellion said his family tree was still displayed there. [redacted]*

- If military morale were seriously undermined by purges, executions, the bite of sanctions, or by favoritism to Saddam's family, or, in the case of the regular military, favoritism shown the Republican Guard. [redacted]

We cannot isolate economic sanctions as a single determinant of developments in Iraq, but we judge that sanctions and other pressures are deepening fissures in Iraqi society;<sup>7</sup> lifting sanctions would

<sup>7</sup> The CIA's Deputy Director for Intelligence; the members of the Military Intelligence Board; and the Director, National Security Agency, believe that economic sanctions, even combined with political isolation and other pressures, will not be sufficient to cause a change of regime in Baghdad over the next 12 months. [redacted]

strengthen the regime significantly. As long as sanctions are in place, Saddam will probably be able to shield key supporters from the worst of the economic downturn by offering them economic and financial perks, such as generous pensions, gifts, and whatever consumer goods and public services are available. He will try to appease other Iraqis by promising higher wages and subsidies and lower prices for food rations and other consumer goods but will find it impossible to insulate most of the populace from declining living standards. He will blame economic failures on the West and on Iraqi officials whom he has publicly charged to oversee reconstruction. [redacted]

### Saddam's World View

Saddam appears unrepentant. He and the government-controlled media explain the defeat in the Gulf as a moral victory, a battle that Iraq really won because it survived the conspiratorial effort of 30 nations intent on destroying the country, its people, and its resources. One Iraqi editorial shortly after the war compared Egypt's defeat in 1967 to Iraq's defeat and inferred that the Arab "masses" could turn Saddam into a victor just as they had transformed Nasir. Saddam remains committed to his vision of Iraq's role in the region and will take calculated risks to achieve his goals. [ ]

Events since January have probably reinforced Saddam's basic sense of isolation, mistrust, and betrayal. He remains parochial and xenophobic. He sees himself and Iraq as victims of an international conspiracy. His speeches since the war refer to "Great Iraq" and the importance of nationalism, Arab solidarity, and anti-imperialism. He is angry at those Arabs who failed to support him and has expressed a sense of betrayal by the Soviet Union and Iran. He also has contempt for those Iraqis, including government and party leaders and military officers, who wavered in following orders. [ ]

Saddam, however, has retained his ability to appear flexible when confronted with imminent danger. He encouraged talk of democratic pluralism when the rebellions threatened the partition of the country, and he admitted to a nuclear weapons program when he feared military retaliation for his deceptions. [ ]

### Saddam's Vulnerabilities

#### Political: Can He Keep Control?

Saddam's strategy for survival includes gestures at political reform:

- He gave a new, expanded Cabinet power to initiate legislative reforms.
- He has hinted at elections for a new National Assembly and a presidential referendum this year.
- He abolished the People's Army—the Ba'th Party militia—and promised to curb corruption in the party.

- He offered amnesty to all Iraqis except military officers involved in the rebellions and offered to negotiate with Kurdish and Shia factions.
- He relaxed restrictions on travel abroad. [ ]

Saddam's political initiatives probably are intended more for external consumption than domestic audiences. We believe few Iraqis, especially Shia and Kurds, expect broader political participation. Saddam also may be trying to appeal to the loyalties of civilian party bureaucrats who advocate limited liberalization to retain power. [ ]

Saddam's actions overall suggest he remains committed to the same narrowly based political style as before the war. Even proposed constitutional reforms reaffirm the dominance of the president. His negotiations with the Kurds and a new law allowing political parties stipulate that all parties will be subordinate to the state and banned from foreign contacts. Moreover, the preeminence of the Ba'th Party is reaffirmed and only it can recruit in the military services. Real power will remain concentrated in the hands of Saddam and a few close associates. [ ]

*The Inner Circle.* Saddam's key supporters remain his extended family, long-time Ba'th Party associates, and a loyal military and civilian intelligence and security apparatus. He has rewarded relatives and cronies who have proved their loyalty with new and expanded powers. Since the end of the war, Saddam:

- Appointed his son-in-law, Husayn Kamil al-Majid, Defense Minister. He retains significant control over the oil and defense industry ministries as well. He has been an important figure in talks with the Kurds and in meetings with UN officials and other prominent foreigners who have visited Baghdad with UN teams since the war.
- Appointed his cousin, Ali Hassan al-Majid, Interior Minister. Known as the Butcher of Kurdistan, he was responsible for the brutal suppression of the Kurds in 1988 and served as Military Governor of Kuwait during the occupation. He also participated in the negotiations with the Kurds and in security talks involving the UN.

- Appointed his half-brother Sabawi to be chief of his internal security organization. Sabawi ran intelligence operations in Kuwait during the occupation. Another half-brother, Barzan, remains in Geneva as Ambassador to the UN. A third half-brother was named governor of Salah al-Din Province, a key Sunni Arab stronghold in central Iraq. [ ]

Saddam retains the loyalty of these advisers and, in fact, has drawn them closer to him. Some, like Deputy Commander of the Armed Forces Izzat Ibrahim, Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, Vice President Taha Ramadan, and Prime Minister Sa'dun Hammadi, were reshuffled to their current posts last February. They seem to be providing a buffer between Saddam and the world in talks relating to the UN sanctions, inspection teams, negotiations with the Kurds, or planning reconstruction. [ ]

Although we lack evidence of opposition to Saddam from within the Ba'th Party, Saddam is nevertheless purging the party of suspect elements and replacing regional leaders with individuals having military or intelligence background. [ ] who visited Iraq in early summer said party members were fearful of losing their privileged status and confused about the impact of proposed political reforms. Saddam will face little challenge from within the party over the next year. Party members' fear of their fate should Saddam fall probably far outweighs their concerns for their future under his rule. [ ]

Saddam's intelligence services (Mukhabarat) have been among the regime's principal instruments of control. Mukhabarat offices were targeted during the March uprisings and may have sustained some damage in northern and southern cities. We believe that Saddam still relies on the Mukhabarat and may have taken measures to restore their strength, but we do not know how successful he has been. [ ]

#### **Military: Can He Keep the Machine Loyal?**

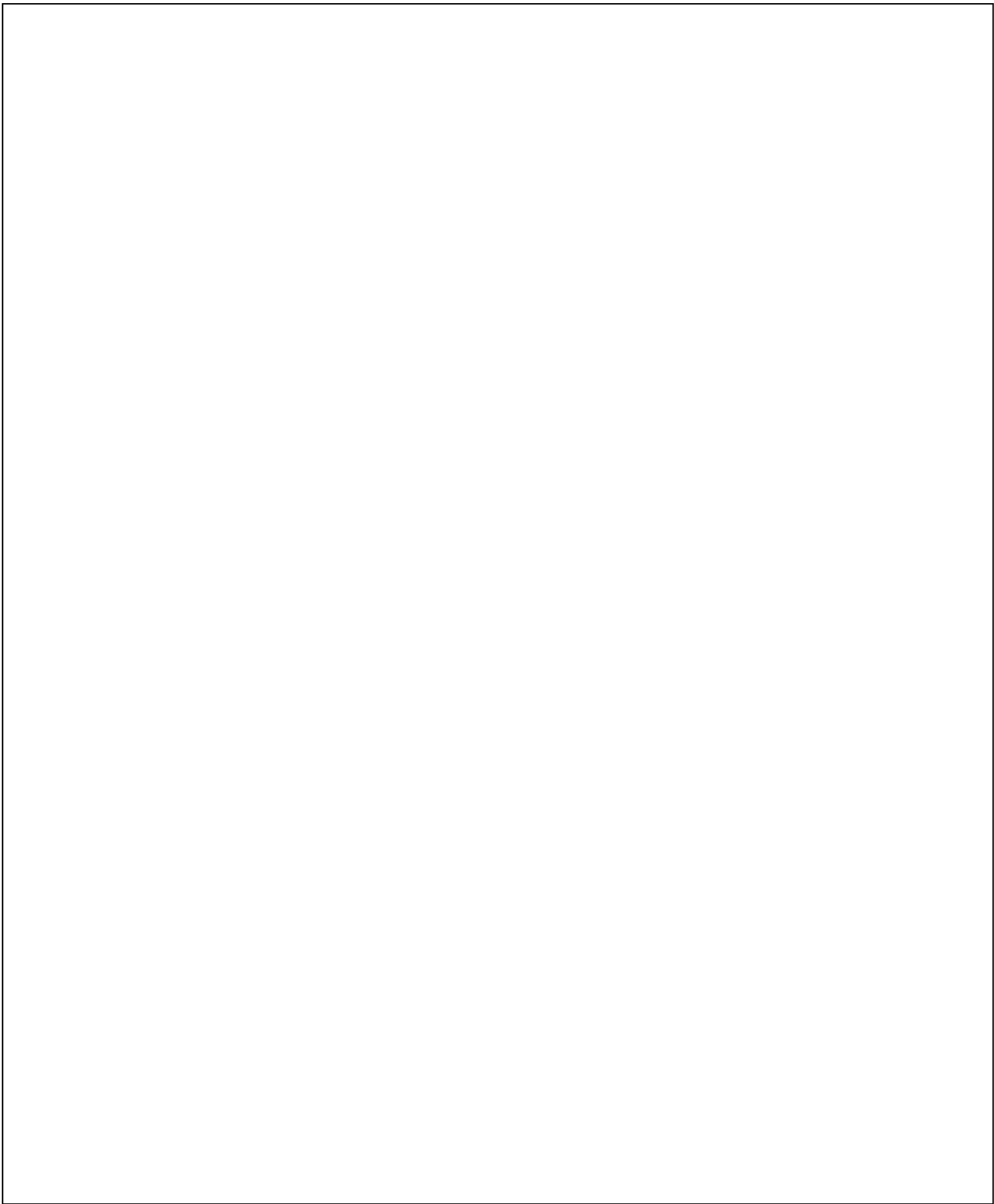
Iraq's military retains the potential to be a major force for change. Alongside the security and intelligence services, which family members usually run, it has been the key to Saddam's staying in power. Its

leaders, most of whom are Sunni Arabs, are hand-picked and presumably share Saddam's regional outlook and internal security concerns. The Republican Guard is deliberately composed mainly of Sunni Arabs from central and northern Iraq to counter the Shia majority in the Regular Army. Saddam has rewarded their loyalty by giving them the best equipment and the most perquisites. [ ]

Saddam is rebuilding and reconstituting the armed forces in ways that maximize their effectiveness and loyalty under the new conditions:

- He is reducing the size of the Army, largely by demobilizing Shia personnel. For the time being, he probably believes a smaller Army with a higher percentage of Sunnis can be more easily monitored by his internal security apparatus.
- He is consolidating understrength Guard units into fewer but stronger units. He is reconstituting Guard heavy units at the expense of Regular Army units. As a result, the Guard eventually will have a higher percentage of Iraq's overall combat power.
- He is moving the Guard headquarters and divisions into garrisons in the Baghdad area but is keeping Regular Army units far from the capital. Thus, the Guard will be deployed between the capital and potentially mutinous Regular Army units.
- Saddam is placing large numbers of senior Guard officers into the upper hierarchy of the military.
- He is ensuring that Guard members and their families receive preferential treatment for basic goods and services. [ ]

**Potential for Military Opposition.** Senior military officers have ample reasons to be disenchanted with Saddam. Even before the war, many in the military were unhappy about Saddam's sudden rapprochement with Iran, his loss of Soviet backing during the Kuwait crisis, and his willingness to risk destruction



rather than find a political resolution to the confrontation with the coalition. They almost certainly resent the appointment of Husayn Kamil as Defense Minister and his concurrent promotion to Lieutenant General. They may be uneasy with Saddam's inability to protect military programs, including weapons of mass destruction. They may resent his inability to get UN observers removed from Iraq, foreign troops removed from its borders, or to eliminate the threat of renewed attack. [redacted]

Nonetheless, Saddam retains a number of levers to keep military opposition in check. [redacted]

[redacted] We lack credible information on the political attitudes of the senior military officers, but most probably they are conservative and intensely nationalistic in outlook. The brutality with which they suppressed the rebellions suggests they will remain loyal, at least while the prospect of internal rebellion exists. Saddam's pervasive security networks combined with the fear of purges, executions, and retribution against family members will also restrain senior military officials. [redacted]

**Economic: Can He Cope With the Bite of Sanctions?**  
The economy is another major factor determining Saddam's ability to survive. In the short term, we expect Iraq to make limited progress in meeting basic civilian needs. Some additional electric power, transportation, telecommunications, and oil facilities will be repaired. These efforts will reach a plateau and many sectors will deteriorate as stocks of spare parts and the capabilities of the labor force are exhausted. Increased deliveries of food, medical supplies, water treatment chemicals, and even distribution of these supplies will be necessary over the next 12 months to avert famine and epidemics. Without the import of at least \$1 billion in foodstuffs, Iraq will not be able to meet its minimum aggregate food requirements by year's end. [redacted]

**Table 1**  
**What's Left in the Iraqi Military: Estimated Iraqi Wartime**  
**Losses and Current Status of the Armed Forces <sup>a</sup>**

	Prewar Status August 1990	Losses	Postwar Status July 1991
<b>Manpower</b>	<b>900,000</b>		<b>300,000-500,000</b>
<b>Ground forces</b>			
Tanks	5,800	3,700	2,100
Armored vehicles	5,100	1,750	3,350
Artillery	3,830	2,730	1,100
Scuds			About 300
<b>Air Force</b>			
Combat aircraft	820	369 <sup>b</sup>	330 <sup>c</sup>
Transport aircraft	75	16 <sup>d</sup>	59
Helicopters	467	33	434
<b>Air defense</b>			
<b>SAM batteries</b>			
SA-2	27	8	19
SA-3	48	6	42
SA-6	54	14	40
SA-8	5	NA	3+
SA-9	33	18	15
SA-13	8	3	5
Roland launchers	52	1	51
Antiaircraft artillery	7,500	1,000+	6,500
<b>Navy</b>			
Missile boats	7	5	2
Patrol boats	23	15	8

<sup>a</sup> This table lists all weapons in the Iraqi inventory, including many that are derelict or otherwise nonoperational.

<sup>b</sup> Includes 115 combat aircraft that flew to Iran.

<sup>c</sup> Does not include 121 aircraft assessed after the war to be intact but derelict, in storage and nonoperational, or held by foreign maintenance facilities.

<sup>d</sup> Includes at least 10 military transports in Iran.

This table is ~~Secret~~

Saddam probably believes he can survive the impact of sanctions by ensuring an adequate supply of goods and services for key supporters—especially those who are close associates; members of his intelligence, security, and personal guard; and those who serve in the Republican Guard. It is the same strategy he employed last year when sanctions were first imposed on Iraq.

Saddam assumes that sanctions will eventually be eased if not removed, even if he fails to comply fully

with UN resolutions. Judging by his tactics, Saddam believes that publicizing economic hardships suffered by ordinary Iraqis offers the best chance for eroding international support for sanctions in the short term. In the longer term, he probably assumes that foreign government and corporate greed will override support for sanctions.

**Taking Care of Key Supporters.** Saddam is trying to assure his primary supporters that he does not jeopardize—but in fact protects—their economic well-being.



Figure 2. Saddam in northern Iraq, spring 1991. (v)

He is allocating most available resources to restoring Baghdad and central Iraq, which are home to his key supporters. Saddam has diverted international food relief earmarked for other cities to Tikrit, his hometown. He has ordered hefty pay raises for the military—especially the Republican Guard—and continues to pay civil servants who are not required to report to work because of damage or other disruptions caused by the war. The regime has established a new bank under Saddam's control that will offer interest-free loans to state employees, veterans of the "Mother of All Battles," and those deemed "friends of Saddam."

**Appealing to the International Community.** Saddam is trying to erode international support for maintaining sanctions. His official spokesmen appeal through the UN and other diplomatic channels for their removal or easing on humanitarian grounds. Trying to exploit human suffering, they have granted foreign observers and journalists unprecedented access to local facilities and even staged demonstrations for a visiting UN mission. They also appeal directly to commercial interests, especially in countries whose compliance with the sanctions significantly damages

**Table 2**  
**Iraq: Minimum Cost and Time Required**  
**for Civilian Reconstruction <sup>a</sup>**

	Cost (billion US \$)	Time From End of War (years)
<b>Total</b>	<b>22-32 <sup>b</sup></b>	<b>5</b>
Infrastructure	16-24	5
Electric power	4-6	3-5
Water	0.02	0.5
Transportation	5-7	2-3
Telecommunications	2-5	3-5
Other infrastructure	5-6	5
Oil sector	2.5	2-2.5
Civilian industry	1	2-3
Agriculture	0.5	<1
Restocking inventories	2-4	1-3

<sup>a</sup> Minimum estimates assume Iraq had access to all material, labor, and financial resources needed; actual timetable for reconstruction will be longer. Estimates are for complete reconstruction, although Iraq does not have to completely rebuild some sectors to restore minimum, or even prewar, levels of services.

<sup>b</sup> Not all in hard currency.

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their own economies, [ ]

**Tapping Private-Sector Resources.** With his regime's resources dwindling or inaccessible, Saddam has loosened many trade and financial restrictions to encourage private enterprise. Merchants can obtain foreign exchange outside of the government-controlled banking system and restrictions on licensing requirements have been eased to facilitate imports by the private sector. The regime is turning a blind eye to what had been considered black-market trading, allowing merchants to openly sell goods well above government-set prices. [ ]

**Waging a Propaganda War.** Iraq's propaganda machine regularly lauds Saddam for postwar economic improvements and blames the coalition—especially the United States—for continued hardships. It also accuses the West of maintaining strict sanctions

deliberately to punish the Iraqi people, and some Iraqis apparently accept this explanation. Saddam has publicly tasked other officials with overseeing and administering reconstruction and setting up numerous potential scapegoats for economic failures. [ ]

### Saddam Looks Outside Iraq . . .

Saddam will apply the same aggressive tactics to ending Iraq's diplomatic isolation and getting foreign support to remove sanctions. He will use the specter of famine and disease, Pan-Arab and anti-imperialist propaganda, and the lure of contracts and debt repayment to restore Iraq's trade and diplomatic ties. Saddam will also try to bully Iraq's former diplomatic allies and trading partners to resume ties. Iraq's near inability and unwillingness to repay debts and the UN sanctions will probably discourage most governments and companies from doing significant business with Baghdad until Iraqi oil begins to flow. [ ]

Saddam has had some limited success. As proof that Iraq once again is part of the international community and that Saddam is not a liability, Baghdad has called attention to its participation in the May meeting of the Arab League, visits by Iraqi officials to Turkey and some Arab states this spring, and visits to Baghdad by foreign dignitaries, even those under UN auspices. Moreover, press [ ] report that at least 18 countries—some of which fought against Iraq—are restaffing their embassies in Baghdad, and perhaps a dozen more are preparing to do so. [ ]

### . . . And the Neighbors Look Back

Iraq's neighbors have little sympathy for Saddam. Except for Jordan, all hoped he would be defeated in the war or ousted in its aftermath. For the most part, they give some measure of support to his opponents or back international efforts to monitor his behavior. But they also worry that his successor will not be able to hold Iraq together or that the delicate balance of

***Iraq Without Saddam: Would It Behave Differently?***

*Saddam Husayn is a product of Iraqi political culture, not an aberration. In the short term, at least, it is likely that any successor to Saddam will share his perspective on the internal and external threats to Iraqi integrity and will have grown up in a culture in which suspicion—of both one's known enemies and apparent friends—is routine and perhaps even required and in which violence is an accepted political tool. Changing the nature of Iraqi politics is a long-term process not likely to be achieved simply by the fall of Saddam Husayn.*

*The most likely successor to Saddam in the coming year would come probably either from those in his inner circle or senior military officers possibly with Ba'ith Party support. A successor would expect and benefit from quick recognition and support from the international community and would most likely receive initial domestic support. In any case, a successor would face the same problems. He would need to address immediately the issues of sanctions, safe borders, and internal security. At home, his methods would be similar to those employed by Saddam: brute force combined with promises of political reform and economic improvement. Most successors would share*

*Saddam's regional ambitions as well, although few would immediately seek opportunities to pursue them. No successor is likely to inspire the kind of fear or command the unquestioned authority Saddam has been able to wield and will thus be at even greater risk than has Saddam.*

*If Saddam were to be replaced by a military figure, or by a combination of senior military officers and government officials, then the character of the regime would probably remain the same—Sunni, Arab, and Ba'hist. Iraq's political agenda and outlook would be Pan-Arab, and its new leaders would probably try to move closer to Damascus, Cairo, and even Riyadh, despite their role in the war. They would not be likely to consider power sharing, and they would be fearful of any changes that might open the doors to a wider role for the Shia majority or Kurdish self-rule. They would seek to protect Iraq's political, military, and cultural institutions as they exist now and as they define their own class interests. They would share Saddam's view that Iraq needed a strong leader to hold it together and that it was Baghdad's natural destiny to play a major role in Arab and Gulf affairs.*

power in the Gulf will be disrupted. In particular, some fear their neighbors will rush to take territorial advantage of the vacuum of power in Iraq or encourage ethnic irredentism by advocating Kurdish or Shia autonomy.

**Iran**

Iranian leaders are intent on Saddam's ouster, and they hope UN economic and diplomatic sanctions will eventually topple him. We expect Tehran to continue to provide moderate levels of support to Iraqi Shia opposition groups and to a lesser extent to the Kurds. They will offer safehaven, training, weapons, money, and advisers or small units from the Revolutionary

Guard. Tehran also appears to be broadening its support of opposition groups to include those based in Saudi Arabia and Syria.

draw on its decadelong relationship with Iran and newly strengthened ties to Saudi Arabia and Egypt to keep regional pressure on Saddam, and it will probably maintain its unilateral trade embargo against Iraq, in place since 1982, even if international sanctions and regional cooperation against Iraq erode.

[ ]

**Syria**

Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad remains disappointed that his arch rival Saddam Husayn retains his hold on power. He probably believes that, if Saddam can rebuild his military and political power, he will attempt to punish Damascus for supporting the anti-Iraq coalition. Consequently, we believe Asad will not attempt a reconciliation with Saddam. [ ]

Instead, Damascus will continue efforts to unseat Saddam. It will continue to provide limited military training and logistic assistance to various Iraqi opposition groups, including the anti-Saddam front Syria supported during the war to liberate Kuwait and pro-Syrian exiled Iraqi military figures. Syria also will

- Monitor and, if necessary, contain the actions of a defiant Saddam, especially with respect to weapons of mass destruction and treatment of regime opponents.
- Maintain coalition resolve during the debate over economic conditions in Iraq and whether to modify or lift sanctions.
- Work with some important US partners in the region, who will feel the political repercussions of Saddam's remaining in power; differing strategies may create strains in their relations with the United States.

We think that, over the next year, Iraq—with or without Saddam Husayn—will have limited capabilities to endanger important US interests and relationships:

- Iraq may use nonmilitary means to harass and intimidate the rulers in Riyadh and Kuwait City in particular, although it will not be able to threaten militarily these neighbors.
- Iraq will not be able to seriously undermine the US peace initiative between Israel and various Arab states, in large measure because its ability to influence the Palestinian movement has been seriously set back.
- Saddam may eventually seek revenge against the United States, but his use of terrorism against US targets will be hampered by the fear of US retaliation and the degradation of his terrorist infrastructure. Nevertheless, limited action against Arab coalition partners or Israel remains possible. He is likely to sanction operations as well against Iraqi defectors and dissidents.

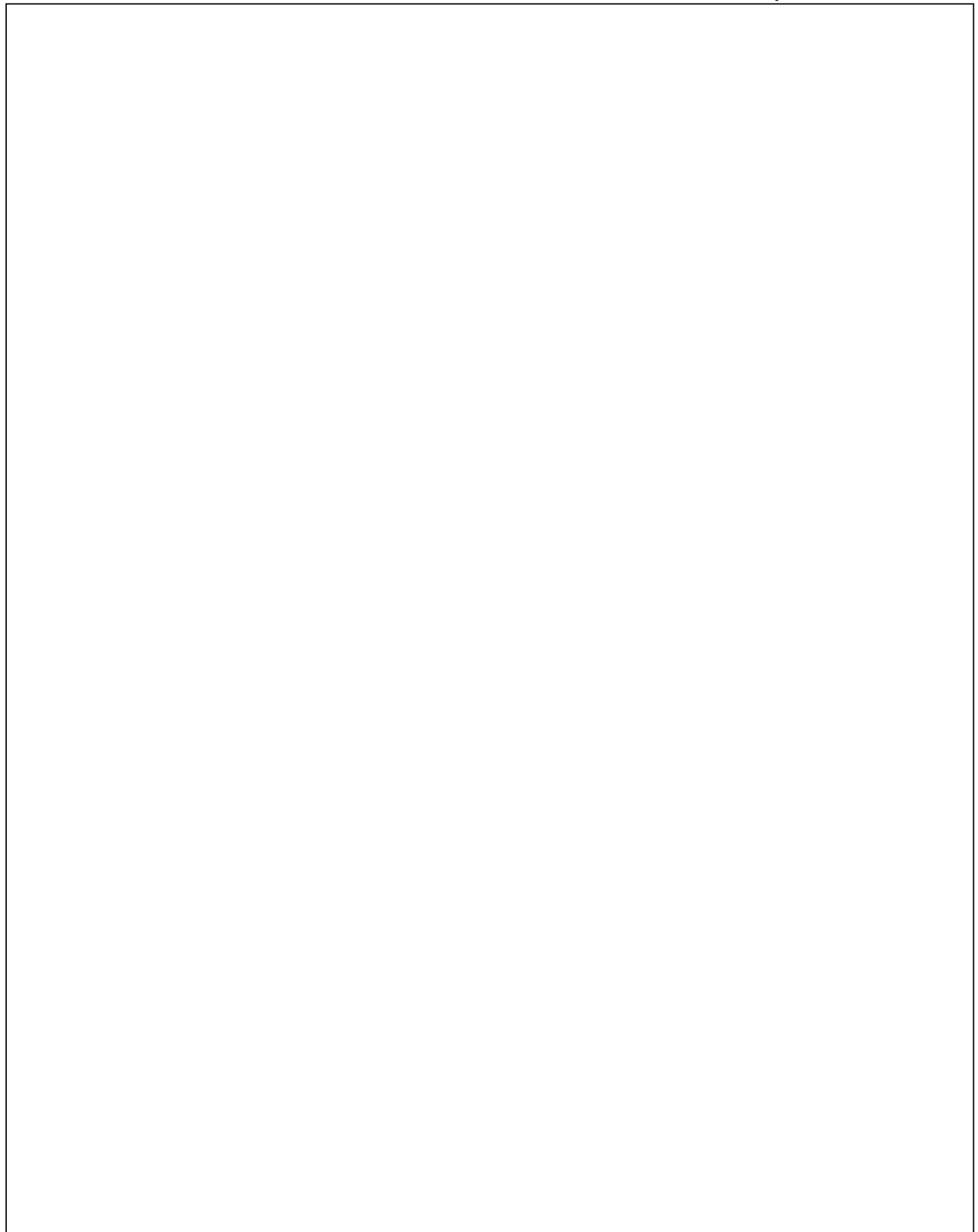
Over the long term, if Saddam remains in power, his ability to reassert Iraqi power and ambition will grow. We anticipate that Iraq will continue to seek ways to weaken American influence in the region and will find its nationalist ambitions at odds with US policies and goals.

#### **If Saddam Lasts Another Year: Implications for the United States**

If Saddam Husayn remains in power over the next year, Iraq will pose a number of challenges, and the United States will need to commit diplomatic, intelligence, and military resources to:

- Ensure Baghdad complies with UN resolutions and pressure the UN and member states to stick with the inspection regime; such efforts could complicate other US arms restraint initiatives in the region.

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